

September 10, 2014

To: Public Lands Interim Committee

From: Mary Ann High

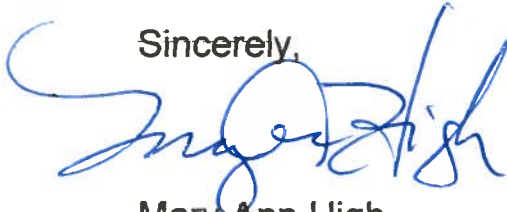
Subject: Public Lands testimony

I write to oppose the proposed transfer of federal lands to the state of Idaho to be owned and managed by the state. My reasons are stated below.

- The state does not have the funds to properly manage these vast lands.
- The state would have to raise money in order to acquire the needed funds. Either they would have to significantly raise taxes on all citizens or they would have to sell off most of the acquired lands.
- Since a significant tax increase would not be supported by citizens, divesting of acquired public lands would be the expected outcome.
- When the public lands are sold into private holding, the public will lose access to all accustomed recreational activities.
- The highest monetary value for the federal lands would be in housing developments preceded by timber removal. The best places to site homes are also critical winter range for elk and deer. They depend on the low elevation, relatively snow free zones, with warm aspects to find food and survive the winter. The animals migrate to these places from long distances. These areas also make the best home sites and where forests would be logged, roads would be built and housing developments constructed.
- The public lands, including the vast contiguous wilderness areas in our state, together with the incomparable wild rivers are what make this state unlike any other in the lower 48.
- This uniqueness is what we should be focused on when envisioning where our economic future lies.

- Does it lie in short term economic gain for a handful of individuals that stand to make a killing on timber and real estate? Or is the real value in perpetuating the assets that are rare and unique here that could answer our economic needs for the long term?
- We have a large, untapped, world wide recreational market and the opportunity to develop that in the future will not exist without public lands.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mary Ann High', with a large, stylized initial 'M'.

Mary Ann High  
313 S. Boulevard St.  
Grangeville, ID 83530